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Life as Romance

BY CHARLES W. GILKEY

OVER the desk of a certain high official in Washington there hangs a framed autograph letter, written to him when he graduated from college by Mr. Justice Holmes. Into the thirty-five words, the two sentences of that letter, the man whom John Morley once called the greatest living judge in the English speaking world; the personality of such distinction that at his death a year ago the entire country united to do him honor as certainly among the first Americans of his generation; the "Master of Sentences," of whom it has been said that he "could make a judicial opinion glitter with 'jewels five words long' "—into these thirty-five words Justice Holmes boiled down no small part of his own philosophy of life. Here are the thirty-five words:

"Life is a romantic business. It is painting a picture, not doing a sum; but you have to make the romance, and it will come to the question how much fire you have in you. . . ."

"Life is a romantic business." That first sentence strikes strangely at first on the ears of a generation determined as we are to be realistic at all costs; a generation that has hardly yet outgrown its recent pride in being a bit hard-boiled. But the man who wrote that sentence was no sentimentalist or romancer, and one of the last men of his generation to entice us into dreaming or wishful thinking. Quite the contrary! In his recent book entitled "Creative Sceptics," our own Chicago philosopher T. V. Smith has given Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. the final place of honor and climax; entitling his last chapter "Doubting One's Way to Democracy"; and quoting on its first page "this final praise of doubt" from Justice Holmes, "To have doubted one's own first principles is the mark of a civilized man." And another contemporary philosopher, Morris R. Cohen, writing in the New Republic on Justice Holmes, has likewise emphasized the critical realism of his whole outlook on life: "Holmes believed in going back behind pious phrases to the actualities of life."

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Indeed, this critical realism of his mind and temper was no small factor in the remarkable bond of understanding between him and men half a century younger than himself. At the very time when the gulf between the generations had been wider perhaps than ever before in recent human history, and when his own advanced age had separated him by nearly two generations from post-war youth, it was this younger generation, fifty and sixty years his junior, that most of all honored and loved and almost worshiped Justice Holmes—and since his death has already begun to build a legend about him. There were various factors in this extraordinary bond of inner understanding. One was the rigorous realism of his thinking; another, the tolerant liberalism of his social and political attitudes; and a third and not least important, the salty tang of his sense of humor. His colleague, Mr. Justice Day, was a frail little wisp of a man: but when Justice Day's son rose to argue his first case before the Supreme Court, he proved to be much taller and heavier than his father. "Ah," whispered Justice Holmes to Chief Justice Taft, "a block off the old chip."

I

Now when such a man tells us that life is a romantic business, the most sophisticated among us may well consider what he means, and why. As we might expect from the author of the famous dictum that the life of the law is not logic but experience, the answer to our question is most plainly to be found in the younger Oliver Wendell Holmes' own experience of life. When he graduated from Harvard at the age of twenty in 1861, every southern wind was bringing to the North the roar of the cannon of the Civil War. Receiving his diploma in June, he volunteered for service at once, received a commission that summer in what turned out to be one of the most embattled of northern regiments, and fought through the entire Civil War. He was five times wounded. At Ball's Bluff a wound through the chest, and then another at Antietam through the neck, were thought to be fatal: but he surprised the doctors both times, and lived to be nearly ninety-four.

These personal experiences directly after college, as all students of his life have pointed out, profoundly affected his whole outlook on life. They saved him from the temptation to conceit and snobbery to which a man with his famous name, privileged position and great abilities might so easily have fallen victim: think of having Ralph Waldo Emerson to guide your undergraduate reading, and make suggestions for your thesis on Plato! They saved him also from the clever irresponsibility of a mere onlooker from the sidelines of life (whom nowadays we call a Monday morning quarter-back), to which any man of his reflective temper and gift for expression is exposed. They taught him to accept with quiet reverence the uncontrollable and the tragic aspects of life and of the universe, as part of what he himself once called "the inscrutable decree." And they taught him most of all that philosophy of action and the creative deed which was central in his attitude toward life. As always, he states it himself better than anyone else can: "Man has in him that unspeakable somewhat which makes him capable of miracle, able to lift himself by the might of his own soul."

In the memorable figure of his own letter to his young student friend decades afterward, life after college did not present itself to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., even with his name and heritage and gifts, as a simple sum of given numbers, adding up to a conspicuous total of success and fame. Life demanded of him far more than the accurate reasoning of the mathematician or the logician. He was handed in youth a palette containing colors both somber and tragic, to be mixed presumably with his own life-blood. The critical question then became, What kind of picture could he paint with those colors? All the world knows now what sort of life-picture he did paint. On his ninetieth birthday Chief Justice Hughes called it "the most beautiful and the rarest thing in the world . . . a complete human life." His letter means first, then, that life is a romantic business because it is an adventure, in which we have constantly to face the unexpected and the uncontrollable—and to show what we have in us by what we can make out of them.

Could any word be more timely for this student generation, going out presently into a changing and uncertain world? In some colleges it is an old tradition that the senior class vote as to who of their number are most likely to succeed; and the figures from preceding classes are consulted to provide a basis for salary expectancies five and ten years after graduation. How strangely out of place these traditions, suitable enough for securer days, seem in the world into which you go forth! Nobody knows what is ahead of you, or of any of us, in such times as these. Professor Ogburn of our own Division of the Social Sciences, who had so much to do with the preparation of the famous Social Trends Report, told us at a recent faculty dinner that of the red-cap porters who carry hand baggage for passengers at the railroad stations in New York City, 101 are holders of college degrees. In an age and a country where that is the case, life has become a romantic business for every college graduate because it is now an unpredictable adventure. What you can make out of it "will come to the question how much fire you have in you."

Twenty years ago a young man of thirty-two, who had been playing tennis with moderate success, lost his right arm in a hideous hunting accident. His friends commiserated with him the more because it was his tennis arm, and his playing days were therefore over. But they did not know their man. In the next ten years he taught himself to play tennis with his left arm; and when at forty-five he became eligible for the National Veterans' Tournament, Clarence Charest won the championship from sixty-three able-bodied competitors from all over the country, three years out of the next five. Gamaliel Bradford remarked of Robert E. Lee that whereas many Americans have shown their countrymen what can be done with success, he more than any other has shown them what could be made out of failure—a character to which all Americans will point with increasing pride so long as American history is told. It is the very heart of Christianity that out of a criminal's cross of shame and trag-

edy, Jesus Christ was able with the help and blessing of God to fashion mankind's most triumphant symbol of redemptive faith and hope and love. "This is the victory that overcometh the world."

II

In the second place, life is a romantic business because it deals constantly with people: and people are never fixed quantities; they tend rather to become what we see in them and call forth from them. T. V. Smith, in the chapter already quoted, makes much of the fact that Justice Holmes learned his magnanimous attitude toward other men, and the thoroughgoing philosophy of democracy into which he worked it out, from his early

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experiences in the army. He came there with all the makings of an aristocrat who might have become a snob. But he soon discovered that he could not tell by a man's name or rank, or even by his uniform, what sort of stuff he had in him. In his own memorable sentence written decades later, he said: "In the great democracy of self-devotion, private and general stand side by side." And he learned this, not only from his mates but from his enemies—as he himself was the first to admit: they were men who wouldn't "run as they ought when beaten." Discoveries like these were creative influences in making over a young man who might have become a first-class "Boston Brahmin" into one of the great exponents and philosophers of democracy in his generation. Another such was Jane Addams, who went as a young woman of birth and privilege almost straight from Rockford College to live for forty-five years on South Halsted Street in Chicago, with all sorts and conditions of men, women and children for her neighbors; and in that neighborly give-and-take developed the human understanding and democratic faith that made her one of the great women—perhaps the greatest—of her generation.

A faith like theirs will be well-nigh indispensable to you, no matter where you go or what you do in the world, if you have very much to do with people. For people are always more than just figures in a column of statistics, or cases in a file. People are variables. Treat them with suspicion or distrust or contempt, or even with indifference and disregard, and they will shrink and stiffen, and stick out their quills like porcupines. Treat them with imagination, understanding, and good will—"put yourself in their place"—and like the soil under the June sun, they will soften and become fruitful; like the seeds below its surface, they will unfold and blossom and bear fruit—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundredfold. That is important to remember, not only in business and politics, but even more in professions like teaching and medicine, and most of all in the closer human relations of neighborliness, friendship, marriage and parenthood. Life is a romantic business because it deals so largely with people; but "you have to make the romance," by the imagination and faith you bring to the painting of the picture.

III

And finally, life is a romantic business because it runs out into mystery, and lays hold on the Infinite. We may not ask Justice Holmes to be our guide to personal religion, for he would be the first to tell us that here each one of us must undertake his own adventure and make his own discoveries. But time and again he erects a signboard that points straight down the religious way of life. Consider for example this summary from his pen of what life is all about: "To see as far as one may, to feel the great forces behind every detail of existence, to hammer out as compact and solid a piece of work as one can, to try to make it first-rate, and then leave it unadvertised." Even more revealing are two sentences from his farewell message to the Federal Bar Association, written in reply to their letter of congratulation on his ninetieth birthday. "Life seems to me like a Japanese picture which our imagination does not allow to end with the margin. We aim at the Infinite, and when our arrow falls to earth it is in flames." Forget that last sentence if you can!

Faith in God is likewise not a sum of philosophical arguments or logical demonstrations or cosmic probabilities, which we add up to make the total of our religious belief. Faith in God is our picture of life's deepest meanings, highest values and most dependable realities colored by what life's experience brings to each one of us, and ordered by the faith and hope and life that give unity and lasting significance to the picture—in the confidence that however inadequate the picture may finally prove it will not turn out at the last to be either irrelevant or insignificant.

Justice Holmes' letter leaves us finally in rather a tight spot. "You have to make the romance, and it will come to the question how much fire you have in you." But what happens when in some sudden storm of temptation or tragedy, when the night is too dark to find

the way without light from somewhere, your little candle of faith and courage flickers and then blows out? What happens through the long nights when you are too anxious and worried to sleep, and in that darkest hour just before the dawn, the ashes not only on your hearth but in your own soul turn gray and cold, because your fire has gone out? It is at just that critical point that religion brings to men its ancient and age-long assurance. "They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." In that critical hour you can bring your extinguished candle back to the high altar of life, and light it there once more at the Central Flame. When the fire goes out upon the hearth of your own soul, you can bring in fresh fuel of faithfulness to your appointed task, and relight the fire again in consecration to that Highest which is far above and beyond yourself.

It is a striking coincidence that this age-long experience of inner rekindling from beyond ourselves, has hardly been better set forth since the Psalmist himself, than by Oliver Wendell Holmes: only this time it was not the great jurist of whom we have been thinking today, but his father the great physician:

> Lord of all life, below, above,
> Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love . . . .
> Grant us thy truth to make us free,
> And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
> Till all thy living altars claim
> One holy light, one heavenly flame.

The Advantage of Altitude

By Alfred W. Swan

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 91:1.

LIKE many scriptural phrases, these words are worn smooth from much use. But when this couplet is heard in the ancient tongue of the Catholic church, the Latin Vulgate gives the end of the first line a precision which our form fails to catch. The "Most High" becomes the "Altissimus." He that dwelleth in the place of Greatest Altitude shall abide under the shadow of Omnipotence.

This suggests the superior advantage of spiritual altitude. He that takes the highest ethical position is on the surest ground. He is forefended against many a peril that a proximate idealism is exposed to. The ethical radical is invulnerable because of his moral altitude.

I

There are many general illustrations of this principle. There is an apt one in the field of music. I once sang in a choir. And I have many happy recollections of those days in the college chorus, and at least one instructional residuum. Our director, especially for the benefit of those whose voices were in the lower registers, said to us: "When you want to reach a high note, do not try to reach up and touch it from below, or you will flat; but affect to go a little higher, and attack it from above. Then you will reach true pitch." The musical homily, therefore, is: When you reach for a high one, attack it from above. And that is as true of ethical goals as of musical pitch. That is the advantage of altitude.

Here is another illustration of this principle. When some of us were in the army air service, this 91st Psalm was called the Aviator's Psalm. That was one of the oblique ways of blessing war with religion. However that may be, in aviation one soon learns the superior advantage of exceptional altitude. It is a good thing to be cruising around up near the ceiling, and have your enemy down below. One of our idols in those days was Georges Guynemer, the French ace, who in two years shot down fifty-three planes—nice German boys, just as fine as Georges—before he got his in September 1917. And however one may question the objectives of those days, there was one thing about his method that is forever valid. Asked one time how he did it, the ace replied: "When on patrol I saw two enemy planes, I did not say, 'How can I get one of them?' but, 'How can I get them both?' " That is a good technique in life. If you are up there high enough to pick that fellow off at 6,000 feet, his buddy, buzzing around on the lookout at 10,000 feet, will sting you in the back of the neck. But if, with high altitude and courage, you are up close under the shadow of the sun, you are in a good position to "get them both." But that requires superior altitude. Now the method, in general, is eternally right. Take a high, adventurous, radical attitude toward life, so that you can get every object down there below.

SINS AND VIRTUES

There are plenty of negative illustrations of this principle. If two mosquitoes are cruising around your ears of a summer's night, there is little use in getting only one of them. The other, left at large, is quite competent alone to torment you into wakefulness. Get them both. So with sin. If two temptations are dogging you, there is no security in licking only one of them. The other can drag your name in the shameful dust, and fill your days with misery. Get them both.

So also with virtue. There is no need to be content with one. For if another be within the range of your duty and desire, and you leave its heights unscaled and unattained, your conscience will be uneasy, and your soul thirsty to be satisfied. Under God, go after both.

There is a deal of truncated living and frustrated experience, because people go only half way with their ideals. They are content with mediocrity, when they might have the superlative experience. Only they taste fully the brimming cup of life, which God pours out for us, who drink it all from him. Spiritual security resides only in the highest idealism. That is the advantage of moral altitude.

Of course, there are certain logical and practical limitations of this principle which had best be disposed of concessively at once. You can't do two opposite things at the same time. You can't put two things in the same place at the same moment without disastrous re-

sults, as every auto accident is witness. Don't try to serve two employers at once, or take fees from opposing clients. Don't two-time anyone. Don't straddle. Get down off the fence. Get both wrongs. Get both rights.

With the landscape thus cleared, then, here is a clear conclusion: There is moral security in taking such high ground that you "get them both." That is the spiritual advantage of superior altitude.

II

Consider, now, some of the serious applications of this principle.

1. Adherence to such a thesis is advisable for young people in college. Parents come to college campuses on

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occasion, to see results—"before and after taking," as it were. It is to be observed that, whenever anything happens amiss in the career of college students, their campus teachers and mentors intimate to parents from back home that, "Well, we have to take just about what you send us up here." And if students come through all the hazards of campus careers and do well, the folks back home strut a little and exclaim, "Well, the background they had from home held them steady and brought them through." How we do all like to pass the buck and claim the credit!

But sometimes students mistakenly assume that they have to make a choice between two of the goods of life about them, as, for instance, between education and health. They grind away late hours at the expense of their health; or they go after athletics at the expense of their academic standing. Now it is an entirely false dilemma we propose between brain and brawn. They are not mutually exclusive; they mutually contribute to each other. A sound body will contribute to a healthy mind; and a well-informed mind will make for an efficient use of the body. Omit either and you handicap the other. Therefore, take high ground, and go after both. No less a goal is worthy and secure.

Or there is a choice proposed between education and religion, as if to imply that a trained mind will clip the eager wings of faith, or that a devoted soul must forfeit intellectual respect. Rather, the very opposite is true. The one contributes to the other. A well-trained mind, equipped with social facts and historical background, will fortify those premises of moral resolution which are primary in the religious spirit. And religion's moods of wonder and expectancy are at once the motifs of scientific discovery and artistic expression. Don't think you have to make a choice between one and the other. Take the high ground that you should strive for both. Only he who seeks the highest is secure. That is the advantage of altitude.

IN BUSINESS, GET BOTH!

2. Or take this principle into the field of business. One does not need to know intimately the principles of salesmanship to see how it might apply. You can imagine which of two agents a sales-manager would favor, each of whom had two prospects, and the first of whom says, "Well, I'll try to get one of them," while the other says, instead "I'll go out and get them both." The first, by his attitude of timidity, will probably get neither. But the second helps himself. He gets his first prospect, and is stimulated by his success to approach the other. He may even be adroit enough to get the two in conference, and let them help sell each other. The successful and valuable representative of his concern is the man who takes an aggressive attitude: Get them both. And one day his boss will say, "Well done, good and courageous servant; accept a promotion."

Or here is the issue so often falsely proposed in business, that you cannot be successful and honest at the same time. There never was a more misleading lie in the field of commerce. Success and honesty are not incompatible; they are necessary to each other. No man's standard is high enough unless it is inclusive here. A reputation for integrity is a good-will asset in a man and in a business. When, therefore, O man, you are tempted or misguided to say, "I cannot in this matter have both success and honesty, so I will sacrifice honesty just a little for the sake of success," for the sake of success and for your soul's sake, have both!

3. Or take this principle of a high and inclusive standard into the field of social and ethical idealism. Attempt is being made today to frustrate the kingdom of God by driving a wedge between the forces solicitous for peace and those concerned for economic justice. There are those who say we can't have both. Political parties are divided here. Some say we will never have economic justice until we fight for it. And if we must make the choice, they say, we will surrender the ideal of peace, and take the other by force. These are the militant radicals, whatever their insignia may be. On the other hand, there are schools of social theory and

parties of social action which say farewell to revolution. We must preserve peace at any cost, they say, even if considerable or great economic injustice remains undisturbed. Even so sensitive an organization as the Fellowship of Reconciliation has been riven here.

But if this principle of resort to the highest idealism is sound, then there is no forced dilemma between peace and justice. On the contrary, the one is indispensable to the other. In fact, the very peace of the world now depends on the establishment of economic justice throughout the great body of society.

Let this be illustrated in the momentous field of relationships between the United States and China and Japan.

We may find here explanation of why the churches protested the elaborate naval maneuvers of our fleet in the Pacific. For one hundred and twenty-five years the churches have been supporting foreign missions, pouring out great wealth and skimping to fill mite boxes, to send missionaries to the orient. Their best trained and most promising young people have been commissioned to distant and difficult fields. These missionaries have separated themselves from homelands and loved ones, and have sent their children back to be educated, while they themselves remained at their posts. Their victims of tropical illnesses they have buried in the hills of foreign nations. The blood of their martyrs has been seed of the church struggling to be born. They have done all this that the gospel of universal brotherhood might be conveyed to lands that lie afar, and that the rapprochements of occident and orient might be truly pacific. And then in a few weeks an embattled navy, strutting up and down the sea lanes, undoes all the good will a century of religious passion and sacrifice has tried to effect. Could the churches do anything else but protest in the name of the God of peace? The misleading reply of the navy department to the storm of protest from religious and peace organizations was that the maneuvers would not approach nearer than two thousand miles to the coast of Japan. But we now know that that meant two thousand miles from Japan's principal and southern islands, which means a very few hundred miles from the northern archipelago. That is, the maneuvers were a deliberate warning to Japan.

MILITARISM AND MARKETS

But what lies back of the desire of naval authorities to threaten Japan and gain experience in Pacific waters? The urge of markets in China, and the insistence that Japan shall not have markets on the mainland, to which there is no open door to other nations. Our annual trade with China amounts to about $112,000,000, while that with Japan totals some $330,000,000; a combined total of less than half a billion dollars. But a successful naval war with a nation so distant as Japan, according to naval authorities themselves, would cost $40,000,000,000. Of course the munition manufacturers would get a good share of that. There might even be, as there was in the European war, one new American millionaire for every two American soldiers killed abroad. What economists we are to move toward a folly like that!

But why are we so concerned about markets in China? Because China is the last big market for an imperialistic capitalism. And if we do not distribute wealth in our own country, with high wages and with labor sharing justly in the profits of industry, our people do not have the purchasing power to consume their own goods. Then, either a foreign market must be found for the surplus goods, or the surplus capital must be invested abroad. The danger of war in the orient, therefore, lies in a capitalism which refuses to distribute wealth to the people who produce it, and which therefore must constantly seek out new fields for dumping surplus goods and for the investment of surplus capital. That is what lies behind fleet maneuvers.

The only way to avert war is to distribute wealth among the people. Economic justice or peace? Never! Get them both, or you will get neither. The pattern of any comprehensive social idealism is clear here. We must advance upon both objectives at once. In so far as these matters are clear to our generation, this much we know. We should refuse to say: "We must abandon the kingdom of peace and take the kingdom of justice by violence." Nor should we concede: "We must surrender the ideal of social justice, in order that peace and tranquillity may be preserved." Rather we should bind ourselves with those idealists who insist on both, and who, knowing that neither will be secure without the other, insist on both at once.

RELIGION, OUTER AND INNER

4. Or, once more, see how this principle of inclusive idealism encompasses the alleged dilemma between inner and outer religion.

People argue about social action and inner peace, as if they were at war with each other. But they are not; indeed they are indispensable to each other. If we try social action without reinforcing ourselves for the long contest by frequent recourse to the springs of inspiration that are in religious literature, in poetry and prayer, we will dry up, and our action will become confused and ravel out into meaningless futility. By the same token, if we try inner emotion without outer ethical and social action, we are paralytic spiritual hypocrites. Seek ye both; for one ministers to the other.

We have had a supreme illustration of this in a distinguished honorary alumna of the University of Wisconsin. On my desk there lies a scarlet volume entitled "The Red Network." It purports to be a Who's Who of radical and dangerous persons and organizations. Among the thirteen hundred individuals catalogued are: the mistress of the White House, a possible presidential candidate on the country's now most conservative ticket, college presidents too numerous to mention, and an unconscionable number of clergymen.

One of the longest and most explicitly accusative sketches is the one about Jane Addams. It is perfectly obvious why she, though honored by many notable societies and institutions, should be viewed with alarm by the compilers of this volume. She took advanced ground on the issues of economic justice and of world peace. Now the church needs penitently to remember that it once placed her on its "black list." It is a matter of record that thirty years ago a church in suburban Chicago once dropped her from its roll for inattendance and lack of sympathy. Twenty years later it came

across this astonishing action in its records, and with apology invited its most renowned ex-member back into the fellowship.

But what is of most moment to us here is not Miss Addams' ethical positions; but rather, the poise between her inner and her outer life are cause for our greatest wonderment. All the world knows of her outward expression in social action. During her more than forty years at Hull House on old South Halsted street, Chicago, she was more than a meliorist; she was a radical, demanding fundamental changes in society. She exhibited an aggressive pacifism, during the madness of the war. But perhaps not so much is known of the inward balance of her spirit.

LESSONS FROM A GREAT LIFE

Within the last year of her life she preached the sermon on a Sunday morning in the University of Chicago chapel. And she had a friend, it is reported, who sat just behind her in the chancel, with the proper medicine in her bag, so that, if one of her always possible attacks should come during the service, she could be revived. That takes inner control. And then there is the story about her last departure for a hospital. It will be one of the great stories about how to end a life. After diagnosis she asked, "How soon must I go to the hospital?" They said, "In thirty minutes." She said, "That's good. It will take me about twenty minutes to finish this book. Then I'll be ready." Twenty minutes to finish this book; then I'll be ready! Could there be better objective evidence of inner peace and poise than that?

But how did she come to possess such inner control? Because, for one thing, she had given herself unstintingly to outward social and ethical action. And when you come down to life's last appraisal, be it suddenly or gradually, that's all you have on the plus side to comfort you—what you've done for someone else. And who can say what were the inner springs of her spirit, who avowed her purpose to "complete the mobilization of the human spirit"? Some revelation of it may be found in a little volume of scarcely more than fragments she collected of things she had said when she had spoken at memorial services for her friends. Under the title "The Excellent Becomes the Permanent," she revealed her inner faith and hope.

Here was an inclusive life, that comprehended outer action and inner poise. She did not make the choice of one or the other. She summoned herself to embrace them both.

This should commend to us the way of One who withdrew to the wilderness to pray, and who came forth to minister to the multitudes, and who from the world of strife ascended to the Father on high.

When therefore, as Pilgrims of the Way, be you young or old, life tempts you to compromise and to go only half the way, to temporize here and slacken there—go all the way with God. Take a radical stand; be content with no less than the highest ideals. Get them both; get them all. Don't cheat yourself. Take everything Christ has to offer.

"He that inhabits the Altitudes shall abide under the shadow of Omnipotence." That is the advantage of Altitude.

Journey's End

By William S. Abernethy

He went out, not knowing whither he went. Hebrews 11:8.

I LIKE the sensation of finding myself lost. When I say that, I am not speaking theologically but geographically. I would not want to have this sensation too long upon me, but a little of it is quite to my liking. I am thinking of unfamiliar roads and out-of-the-way paths. The old highways that I have been over many times, and every foot of which I know, I have grown tired of. I like to turn aside and travel a road that leads I know not where, being certain that eventually it will lead me to familiar places. This is a perfectly harmless pastime as long as I have no serious business to attend to, and no specific destination to reach. Never have I been lost for very long. Always have I managed to find my way out eventually.

But when I really set out to go somewhere, I want a road map. I want to know where the place is, the direction in which it lies, and then as a last precaution I usually find out in advance the condition of the roads. Yes, it is a good thing for one to know his destination before he sets out to go anywhere unless it be a pleasure excursion. Drifters there are, and many of them, who seem to be not at all particular as to the point of arrival. Keeping on the move with no special regard for direction quite satisfies them. They are somewhat like the illiterate fellow who admitted his inability to read. "I can read figgers," said he, "but not words. When I see a road sign I can tell how fer but not where to." But knowing "where to" is quite essential.

INTO AN UNKNOWN LAND

Our text has reference to Abraham, a roving tribesman of the long ago, an agriculturist and possessor of great herds of cattle and sheep. Of necessity he must move about from one place to another to find pasturage for his livestock. Rumors reached him in his far southern home of a land to the north where acreage was ample and subsistence abundant. His father before him had heard the same reports and one day had bestirred himself and really started. But being an easily satisfied person, he never reached his destination. He was sidetracked at Haran. The son however was of different mold. He too set out to go to the land of Canaan and "into the land of Canaan he came," we read. It is with reference to this hazardous trip which Abraham took into the unknown north that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks. "He went forth not knowing whither he went." His destination he knew in a general way, but he had never been there; no road maps were available, no guides to show him the way. It was a faith venture in very truth.

And because of this remarkable expedition under such circumstances, Abraham finds himself listed among the immortals of faith. An internal urge, something like the instinct that drives the birds northward as spring approaches, said "Go Abraham"—and off he went though he did not know where.

AFTER GRADUATION—WHAT?

The college student today faces a situation not unlike that which confronted Abraham. Commencement time, the four-year grind over, diploma at hand. The glamor of college days, the happy associations, the good times, all these have come to an end. Now what? He has been pursuing a definite line of study, with his eyes on a goal that from early days he had hoped to reach. Or possibly with no fixed goal in mind he has believed what he had so often heard said, that the cultural results of a college education would greatly enhance his prospects of stepping into some good business position. And now the time has arrived and he is looking for the fulfilment of the hopes he has cherished. He will take a couple of weeks off to rest up and then tackle his job. But he discovers the job isn't there. Business houses seem not to want him. Industrial concerns are not clamoring for his services. The teaching profession has no vacancies. All dressed up intellectually and no place to go. Nobody wants him.

A certain technical school of which I have knowledge was annually graduating a class of more than three hundred men a decade ago. Weeks before commencement time, every man in the graduating class who had successfully weathered the rigid requirements of the course was eagerly engaged by some industrial establishment. The supply was not large enough. These boys immediately stepped from the classroom into well-paying positions. But how different today! Two years ago, in this same technical school, not a man in the graduating class knew on Commencement day what he was going to do.

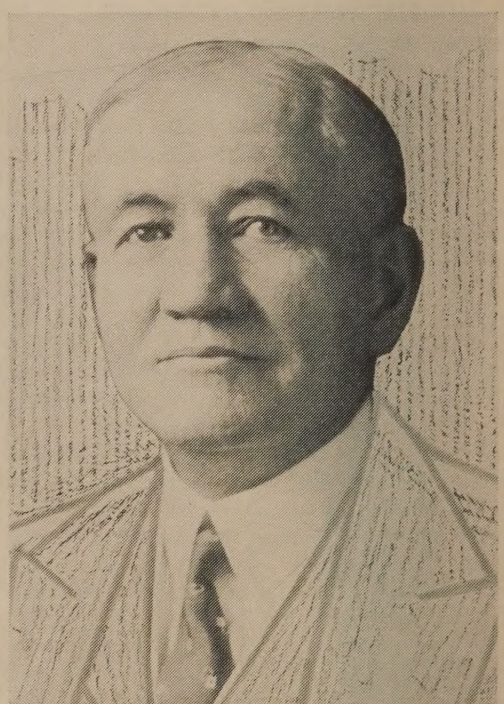
No sadder aspect of these depression days can be imagined than the tragic situation which confronts thousands upon thousands of the young people of the land who are going out not knowing whither. They are splendidly equipped but nobody seems to require their services. Ready to do a constructive piece of work, but no demand for them. When the historian of the future sets out to write the story of this period through which we are now passing, when he begins to compute the damage wrought and the loss sustained, he must of necessity tell about the grievous harm to character and morale that young people have suffered in that society seemed to have no place for them.

BEWARE OF CYNICISM

Finding themselves in that situation some have grown cynical and sour. They have become enemies of a society that seemed to turn its back on them. Their belligerent attitude has increased as the unemployed days have followed one upon another. Here and there others have taken a different attitude. If I cannot do the thing I want to do and like to do I will learn to like the thing I have to do, they have said, and in that frame of mind have gone on not to be conquered but to conquer.

It is to the group of disappointed, disillusioned young people who will be pouring forth from the colleges of the land this month that I address myself. You are faring forth as did Abraham, not knowing whither you go. You may not realize it, but you are heading in one of two directions; either you are moving toward that broad dumping ground where are to be found the incompetents, the failures, the beaten ones, the malcontents, or you are joining the ranks of those who accept the challenge that this difficult day presents and resolutely say, "I refuse to be beaten."

I wonder if there ought not to be established in our colleges another chair. Just what to call it I do not know, but I know what sort of instruction I would like to see given in that classroom. It would be instruction in "The Art of Facing Life." Possibly the professor who occupied this chair could offer a course in "Individual Morale." He might begin his course by asking, "What do you do when you have nothing to do?" I am certain that a vast number of people need more than anything else in these days to have their morale stiffened.



William S. Abernethy

But let me suggest some very essential qualities for a day such as this when the supply is abundant and the demand exceedingly meager. I would mention first: the cultivation of *resourcefulness.*

It is quite easy in this day of specialization to fall into the habit of thinking that if we find the "Road Closed" sign up on the highway we were bent on taking, all roads are closed. Why, bless you, don't you see the "Detour" sign? The highway commissioners always put it up when they close the road. It may not be as good a road, but I never took a detour yet that I did not discover sooner or later that it opened out upon a well-paved highway. To be sure I am not altogether pleased when I find that "Detour" staring me in the face, but I don't stop there, nor do I turn back.

How frequently we run upon Detour signs in life!

You can't go this way. The road is barred. You must find some other. You wanted to teach, but you can't. The woods are full of unemployed teachers. You have music in your soul and you feel that you must devote your life to music. All right, if you have an independent income, but if you are hoping to earn your living on your piano or with your violin, the chances are not the best. Plenty of musicians are on relief rolls. You have fitted yourself to be a civil engineer, but civil engineers are a drug on the market. No room there. You have prepared yourself for general business administration. So have thousands of others. The supply greatly overtops the demand. Or you may have cherished the hope that you might fill that high and holy office of wife and mother. Even here you face the "Road Closed" announcement, for marriage finds itself involved in economic requirements which so many are not able to meet.

Look around for the Detour sign with the hand pointing in some other direction. Follow it. This is not the only road. You have more than one gift. Most of us never get acquainted with ourselves. We are not aware of our own capabilities. "Stir up the gift that is in thee," writes Paul to Timothy. He seems to be thinking: "If that boy ever wakes up, look out for him. He is half asleep now. He is not aware of his own powers. But some day he may be aroused."

CLOSED ROADS AND DETOURS

A young man who came out of college a few years back, well equipped to teach, found the "Road Closed" sign confronting him. Being of a mechanical turn of mind he fashioned a toy one day for a small boy friend of his. It took. Other small boys wanted the same toy. He is at the head of a well-paying manufacturing business today, making those toys. He took the detour and it led out into the open. And many are taking detours. One of the interesting developments of the day appears in the use many are putting to dormant, undeveloped talents. They could not go the way they wanted to go, so they followed the detour.

A friend of mine tells me that he once stood on the athletic field at Rugby and on the wall, facing the field, he read this carved inscription:

> This stone commemorates
> the exploit of
> Wm. Webb Ellis
> who with a fine disregard for the rules of football as played in his time, first took the ball in his arms and ran with it, thus originating the distinctive feature of the Rugby game.
> A.D. 1823

"A fine disregard for the rules of the game!" Magnificent. That same fine disregard for the rules, running full against precedent and doing the unheard of thing, must often be displayed. The pioneers in every line have shown it. Jesus himself did.

Again, it is very essential that we cultivate the fine art of *patient waiting*. This is an old-fashioned virtue that our fathers and mothers probably knew something about, but with which we in this fast moving age are but slightly acquainted. I find that I want things to happen in about twenty minutes from the time they start. I want results and want them quickly.

Is not that the spirit of the age? Not satisfied with the meager, somewhat irregular, efforts of the lowly hen we build our chicken houses now with electric light fixtures. Along about four o'clock of a winter's morning, when poor Biddy is enjoying her beauty nap, the lights go on automatically in her living quarters and not being able to sleep she begins to scratch, thus getting in three hours of extra work, and that together with scientific feeding results in more eggs. And now some scientist says that it is possible by the stimulation of certain glands to hurry a boy's growth along and enable him to jump from seven to fourteen in a few weeks' time. Horrors! What next? It is all part of this restless, hurrying age that demands results, regardless of the means employed to secure them.

It is time we were learning that patient waiting has its value. I know of no virtue quite so necessary in these days. Snapshots are all right, but time exposures often bring best results. A European art critic found fault with our American methods, as well he might. "You Americans hurry things along too much," he said. "You rush your statues through the studio and immediately set them up on their pedestals in public parks, to be condemned later on. In Europe we put the plaster models on exhibition for months. We let the people see them and criticize them before we cast them in bronze or carve them in marble." His criticism may apply to the work of many of us who are not sculptors. Who knows but that out of the trying conditions brought about by these depression days we shall learn that most valuable lesson—how to wait patiently!

NEW CALLS TO FAITH

And there is one other quality that I would speak of. Abraham's *faith* certainly calls loudly to us. He had many good qualities but only this one is singled out. He found a place in this list of worthies because of his faith. Sherwood Eddy says that faith is not the ability to believe something in spite of the evidence, it is the ability to dare something in spite of the consequences.

I am anxious lest you lose your faith. And when I use the term I am not thinking of it at all in a theological sense, but in that plain, practical sense in which we employ it every day, though we may have some other name for it. We have faith in our bank and therefore we go to the teller's window and hand over our hard-earned money to him. We have faith in our doctor and take his medicine even though we may not have the slightest idea what it contains. We have faith in the engineer who drives our train through the night and therefore we lie down in the Pullman berth without a thought of fear. We have faith that there will be a tomorrow and therefore we make plans for the future in the confident expectation that other days will dawn.

I plead for a renewal of faith. Have faith in your fellow men. A rogue now and then appears, but most men are honest, I verily believe. Have faith in our

institutions, in the ultimate righting of this topsy-turvy world, in the final triumph of good over evil, in the eventual, sure triumph of justice and good will. All may not be well with the world, in fact I am sure it isn't, but God is still in his heavens. Confusion and disorder may prevail. It is manifest on every hand. But I am an optimist and I refuse to be anything else.

A cartoon that appeared recently showed a couple of Egyptians, apparently man and wife, holding a roll of parchment. The man holds one end, while the woman feverishly unrolls the other. "Here Rameses," she says, "you hold this end. I want to see if it has a good ending."

I have faith enough to believe that this strange riddle of life, out of which some of us today can make nothing, has a satisfactory ending. Let us work and wait and believe.

Finding Power from God

By Jerome Davis

Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. James 4:8.

WE are living in the richest country in the world. God has given us abundant natural resources and the technical means of their realization beyond anything we deserve. We actually have the physical means to create a kingdom of heaven on earth—that is, if it could be created by material means alone. In this potential land of happiness about one-sixth of the nation's population are on relief. Millions are living in semi-starvation. In the face of such bitter want we have tried to create scarcity value by plowing under wheat and destroying livestock. No wonder mankind is confused. Some would even have us believe that we are witnessing a form of pathological group insanity.

In such a world the need of a God of love is overwhelming. In the most exalted moments of our lives we have all felt this need. We want dynamic power which comes from above and many of us are failing to get it. We are far from living day by day in the presence of God. We vaguely wish God to be a part of us but are often painfully aware that he is not.

How can we come to find and know God and appropriate his power? Let us pause for a few moments to consider together a few aspects of the problem. In the eighth verse of the fourth chapter of James the author says: "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you."

At all times and among all peoples there have been those who have eagerly sought to find God. They have not always agreed as to method. It has sometimes been thought that finding God is a passive process, listening to his voice; that is, man must do nothing but open his ears to God. While there is an element of truth in this point of view, the words of James, "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you," imply that the gospel writer believes more is needed. To be genuinely religious involves a revolution of the self. This means that many of us must revolutionize our outlook, our attitudes, our personality. The Oxford group have stressed this need, emphasizing the fact that men are sinners, that they can be changed, that conversion is a prerequisite to change, that the changed soul has direct access to God, that the age of miracles has returned. Nevertheless their insistence on guidance sometimes seems to make them emphasize the passivity of the approach to God.

Even Karl Barth, whose heroic stand for freedom of conscience calls forth our admiration, maintains that religion is separate from the world and civilization. It is not its business even to attempt to realize the kingdom of God on earth. There are others who believe that religion involves remolding both the individual and the group.

Fearless Search for God's Truth

What does it mean to draw nigh to God, and how can we do it? Whatever else it may or may not mean, it certainly involves our becoming God-oriented rather than self-oriented. Selfishness, impurity, the individual sins fade away before the man who is thinking constantly of God's task for him. I pass over these obstacles because most of us are well aware of them. But what positive things must we do to draw nigh to God? We should recognize, of course, that there is no single pathway to him. The ways are legion, and may range from those of a Kagawa to those of a Buchman. We must recognize that every individual must find God in his own way and by the method which is best for him.

If we are to revolutionize ourselves—become God-oriented rather than self-oriented—we must pay the price of fearlessly searching for truth. If we want spiritual power we must make sure it is reinforced by truth. I am quite aware that most of our claims to truth are but rough guesses and hypotheses. Possibly there is little that we know which can be called final truth. Nevertheless we are under a tremendous compulsion to seek to find out so far as we can what is and what ought to be. Many individuals delude themselves as to what is truth. The history of religions is replete with crucifixions and persecutions in the name of truth when all that was being done was to create martyrs to truth and to perpetuate error.

It goes without saying that hard, painstaking work is one of the prime essentials for finding truth—and how few of us there are that can measure up to this high standard of drawing nigh to God! One thing required of us, if we are searching to find God's truth, is to be open-minded to that which is new. We must not shut out opposing attitudes merely because they conflict with our own stereotypes. One hundred years ago in Ohio the school board was petitioned for the use of the schoolhouse for a debate on the merits of railroads. The official reply of the board was: "You are welcome to use the schoolhouse for all proper debates, but such things as railroads are rank impossibilities. There is nothing in the word of God about them. If God had intended his faithful creatures to travel at the frightful speed of fifteen miles an hour he would have foretold it through his holy prophets. It is a device of Satan to bring im-

mortal souls down to hell." We of this proudly scientific age smile at this and then go out and oppose the right of some individual to condemn economic wrong if it conflicts with our ideas and the interrelations of our vested interests. St. Jerome once remarked: "Opulence is theft. If not committed by the immediate possessor, then by his predecessor." How few ministers there are who would care to draw nigh to God by placing this motto on the walls of their own religious institution!

THE BARRIER OF NATIONALISM

Nationalism often becomes a barrier to truth and to God. When the Congregational and Christian churches took a strong stand against war, they wrote to the presi-

JEROME DAVIS

ents of all the universities in America which still retained compulsory military drill asking them to exempt conscientious objectors of their communion. The presidents of the universities thus addressed all prided themselves on being Christian. They were supposed to be leaders of America in the search for truth. Yet how many there were who demanded the expulsion of every conscientious objector refusing military drill. One of these administrators, long a Congregationalist—and whose grandfather was a minister—stated that he believed that all military officers were more anxious to avoid war than was the Congregational church and that he had no respect whatever for a conscientious objector. Another president replied to the moderator of the church: "I cannot help feeling that many of your excellent people have lost the true American spirit."

The president of Ohio State university said that in the past he had tried to excuse some conscientious objectors, but whenever he ventured to do so he was subjected to such "a volume of criticism, publicity and attack" that he had at last made up his mind to excuse no one.

Thus does nationalism debar from the truth and from God. Perhaps we apprehend this, but do we as clearly recognize the stereotype of capitalism, and the subtle appeal of materialistic values? May not unconscious acquiescence to the standards of materialism and profit be even more damaging and dangerous to unfolding truth? If we are to search fearlessly for truth and so draw nigh to God, we must investigate the dangerous effects of the dominant system in which we are immersed. And we are living in a capitalistic society.

There is a tendency for us all to take on the color of the existent economic order. We are all especially prone to conform to any dominant existing power. Consider an illustration which is safe because it is ancient. Take the headlines in one Paris newspaper day by day as Napoleon fights his way back to power after his exile and notice the rapid change in the way Napoleon is described:

March 12, "The Monster Slept at Grenoble."

March 13, "The Tryant has passed through Lyons."

March 19, "Bonaparte is Advancing with Rapid Steps, but he will Never Enter Paris."

March 20, "Napoleon will, Tomorrow, be under Our Ramparts."

Two days later, after his arrival: "His Imperial and Royal Majesty Arrived Yesterday Evening amid the Joyful Acclamations of His Devoted and Faithful Subjects."

HOW SOCIAL PRESSURE STIFLES TRUTH

Again we smile at this sudden about-face, but how prone we are to do likewise! The pacifist turns militarist if war is declared. During Coolidge prosperity those who criticized the Insulls were "injudicious" and lacking in judgment. Even ministers were hesitant to condemn the gross immoralities of the fantastic and mythical era of prosperity. Our educational leaders, supposedly dedicated to the search for truth, rarely challenge capitalism or investigate the moral values of the system. Instead they may penalize those who sincerely search for truth in this area.

A professor in the University of Pittsburgh was summarily dismissed by the chancellor in the midst of a money-raising campaign because he championed the Security league, although this same chancellor had previously stated he was one of the ten best teachers on the campus. Later the chancellor masked his reasons behind the cloak of religion, claiming that this professor was irreligious. This in spite of the fact that some of the ministers endorsed the professor.

Think you that it is only educational leaders who do this? We all have a tendency to do likewise, each in our own sphere.

How quickly we take on the color of our social set! I was given a letter from a responsible official who described the brutality of a lynching in Florida. He told of flesh being burnt off a living Negro. At first he felt shame for being present, but when he found that all his friends and the officials of the city were there he said his sense of shame left him. We are all like that and when our sense of shame leaves us God leaves too.

Besides fearlessly searching for truth, which this man did in some measure, we must *live the highest truth we know.*

It is precisely this which is difficult to do—even in a theological seminary. We fall victims to the lure of intellectual speculation for its own speculative sake. We love the play of thought. It is a form of game but sometimes outside reality. We speculate for the fun of mental gymnastics. We may search for truth, but do we translate that truth into action? Sometimes we spin beautiful theories and lose God in the process. The author of the famous volume, "Outwitting Our Nerves," wrote a best seller for *others* to read. It was not long before the author was lying in a hospital for nervous diseases. How easy it is to spin theories! How hard to live the truth we know!

CHRISTIANITY A WAY OF SACRIFICE

It is not only that we fall victims to mental and intellectual sleight-of-hand, but we are so often mere parlor Christians. We wear the label, even attend chapel easily, but are unwilling to seek out the full implication of the truth about Christ, for genuine truth implies action and sharing that truth. It means revolutionizing ourselves in the light of truth. Christ was a Galilean peasant who challenged the vested interests of his day, who uttered more scathing denunciation of wealth than almost any other leader has ever uttered. Yet we so easily fall back into luxurious, comfortable living far from the controversial hot-spots of our time. How few Christian leaders there are who stand in real danger of losing their positions, much less of being crucified for righteousness' sake! I do not imply that the adequate criterion of Christian living is loss of position; I am merely saying that Christian heroism in a non-Christian social order must involve some measure of opposition, with possible loss of salary or place.

Religion is a way of life, not merely a creed. It involves service and sacrifice for the common good. It necessitates both love for God and for man. Lop-sided religious expression is another bar to truth and to drawing nigh to God. We may believe ardently in the individualistic personal side of religious faith but be lukewarm toward its social expression. We may be so convinced that religion roots basically in the individual personality that we refuse to be concerned with social injustice and social change. If so, we may become intolerant toward those who insist upon a social expression of Christianity. On the other hand the reverse may be true. We may be such strong supporters of what is sometimes called rather erroneously the social gospel that we are intolerant of the personal individualistic evangel. True religion inevitably embraces both a vertical relation with a Father-God and a horizontal relationship with our fellow men. Yet do we not all tend to be out of balance so much so that we sometimes temporarily lose even religion itself?

Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. This injunction involves more than revolutionizing ourselves through fearlessly searching for truth. It involves trying to change the community and the social order as well. For we cannot draw nigh to God if the community is all the time shutting God out from thousands of our brothers and sisters and incidentally from ourselves as well.

A SOCIAL REVOLUTION CALLED FOR

This involves a revolution of society as well as of the individual. We must see and understand the social need which is all about us. How can we draw nigh to God if we do not recognize that we ourselves are partners in the injustices of society? God is partially shut out from us so long as exploitation is part and parcel of the civilization which—it is true—enables us to have the leisure and opportunity to study in this institution of religion.

We must then see and understand the glaring social need of our time and of our community.

We recently made our annual laboratory trip to New York. Here were the great cathedrals of Fifth avenue and all about them was the evidence of a diseased and decaying social and economic order. There were many so-called Christians who were so engrossed in a variety of other things that they failed to pay the price of seeing and understanding the desperate social needs which were all about them. By seeing and understanding I do not mean seeing poverty and giving to the community chest, but rather seeing the terrible injustice which is present and trying to dig down to the basic causes which produce it. And what is producing the poverty, disease and death which infest our cities like a plague? The causes are obviously complex but one cannot escape the conclusion that part of the difficulty is the present economic order itself.

We visited the poor-house. The chaplain told us that an overwhelming number of the individuals who were there came because of the injustice and exploitation of the economic system under which we live. We went through the penitentiary and saw the broken lives, the marred souls kept in idleness and locked up in badly ventilated stone cells. We asked what was the basic underlying cause. The keeper replied that if you take out the cases where there is biological defect the rest are due to the economic order.

We went to the hospital for mental disease. One might expect to find that there at least the difficulty was not due to the economic system. Yet even there the doctor told us that there were many cases which were due to the added stresses and strains of an unjust economic system.

"DEAD HUMAN FRAGMENTS"

We went to the morgue. There we found a stream of one thousand five hundred dead human fragments coming in every month. They had once been lighted by the spark of the divine. Here was the body of a man who for months had sought work and could not find it. On Thanksgiving day he ended it all by jumping from the Queensboro bridge. He needed individual salvation, to be sure, but a social order which tolerates the conditions causing him to act desperately needs social salvation. We cannot draw nigh to God in the fullest sense while society is pushing our brothers over Queensboro bridges. We found that during the depression there had been an increase of twelve per cent in the number of cases at the morgue. We saw the baby vault where

from time to time repose thousands of dead babies whose fathers and mothers are so poor that they cannot afford even to bury their own dead.

If in the space of two brief days in New York we found at the poor-house, at the penitentiary, at the insane asylum and at the morgue so many cases which were there because of the injustice and exploitation of the economic order, dare we as Christians remain silent or refuse to act? It is small wonder that one of the victims of this injustice says: "Memories of a wife and children huddled around a little laundry stove, our last piece of coal being in it, empty bellies, scrawny bodies, black despair—God, I swear I will die in combat against such a monstrous system!"

We have already seen that if we are to draw nigh to God we must be God-oriented rather than self-oriented, and this involves appropriating spiritual power through *fearlessly searching for truth.* But it is not enough to find truth—we must *apply* it. Our individual lives cannot be revolutionized unless we live the truth we know.

Similarly in the social realm, if we are to try with God's help to revolutionize society we must see and *understand* the glaring social needs of our time. But this alone is not enough, we must be *willing to sacrifice* to support God's cause of changing these conditions. Our willingness to sacrifice is the final test of our ability to draw nigh to God.

Many Christians think they have sacrificed in full measure when they give their father-in-law or their relatives generous sums of money. Some believe that their sacrificial spirit is shown in a check for fifty or a hundred dollars to the community chest.

PALLIATIVES NOT ENOUGH

These things, however necessary, are palliatives. Do we similarly see the need for organizing the workers into trade unions that they may demand conditions which are Christian in factory and counting house? We owe a tremendous debt to the millions who are being exploited in factory, counting house and oil field. The very buildings of the theological seminary itself are a partial monument to the debt we owe.

Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Every time a Christian sacrifices his own comfort to help support a cause which makes for Christian living, to that extent he is drawing nigh to God and the power which comes from God inevitably flows out to him.

Let us recognize that we cannot revolutionize the self to the highest degree if we fail to attempt to revolutionize the social order. Individual religion alone, devoid of social responsibility, is unchristian. Social religion without individual faith is to some degree impotent. The soul who genuinely wishes to appropriate power from above must draw nigh to God by reorienting both himself and society toward God. Then and then only will God most fully dwell in him.

THE world is perishing for want of a nation which will lead the way in unselfish planning. America can show the way to greatness, not through becoming the world's boss, but by becoming the world's servant. World service is the note that needs to be exemplified in nations. FRANK C. LAUBACH.

The Creed of a Builder

By WINFRED ERNEST GARRISON

I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Nehemiah 6:3.

THE first six chapters of the old and seldom read book of Nehemiah contain an account of a very thrilling enterprise. It is one of those hero-tales which sometimes break the monotony of an otherwise dreary period of history. Here is the story. The long and glorious history of the Hebrew people had apparently ended in disaster with the carrying away of the nation into captivity in Babylon. Jerusalem had fallen. Temple and wall were destroyed. The land had been depopulated and the national hope burned low. But there was still some fire in the ashes, for a "remnant" of Israel and of Israel's faith remained. After a generation or more, there was a partial return from Babylon and a partial restoration of the Temple. Later, a young patriot named Nehemiah obtained royal permission to return to the home of his fathers and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He found the old home not wholly deserted, but worse. It was overrun by a mongrel horde in whom captivity had developed all the baser traits to which subject peoples are peculiarly liable. They had neither faith nor fancy for the young patriot's daring enterprise, for they saw no profit to themselves in the rebuilding of the walls. So they hindered the plan by every means within their power. Their efforts are typical of the successive forms of opposition which any good enterprise may have to encounter.

First, they tried ridicule, a weapon used by fools and feared by cowards. Sanballat, who was a leader among the obstructionists, laughed at Nehemiah and said: "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves?" And "Tobiah the Ammonite was with him and he said: 'Even that which they are building, if a fox go up he shall break down their stone wall.' " Evidently Tobiah was the humorist of his day. His weapon was the sneer of the supersophisticate—a weapon which sometimes seems to us very modern but which is really much older than gunpowder. But while the laugh went round, the builders kept on building. A man who does not mind being laughed at is even more invincible than one who does not know when he is whipped.

"I AM DOING A GREAT WORK"

But as Nehemiah kept his temper, the enemy lost theirs and turned from ridicule to war. "They conspired all together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion therein. But we made our prayer to God and set a watch day and night." Nehemiah, it seems, was no absolute pacifist, and he prepared for strictly "defensive warfare." He divided his men into fighters and builders, and the builders worked with sword in one hand and trowel in the other. It is a poor way to work. It reduced the efficiency of his construction by more than half, but the work went on.

But Sanballat availed no more with the sword and

pike than he had with sneer and jeer. In fact, he never got beyond the stage of threatening. Perhaps he never intended to. So now he turned to the last resource of a despairing antagonist. He asked for a parley. He proposed that they stop and talk it over and compromise their differences. Perhaps, after all, he suggested, they might find a way to work in harmony. There must always be a certain amount of give and take in public life. They were both practical politicians, and—was not compromise the beginning and end of political wisdom? After all, they were both Jews and they ought to get together, for the good of the party.

It was then that Nehemiah sent back from his station on the half rebuilded wall the reply for which, if for nothing else, he would deserve undying fame. Here is the record: "Then Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me saying, Come let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers to them saying: I am doing a great work so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you?" There is a world of difference between compromising with colleagues as to the best method of doing what you all want done, and compromising with those who want to divert you from your objectives to attain their own. It is not always easy to distinguish the two cases. Nehemiah did.

THE DIGNITY OF A TASK

Here is a message which comes ringing across the centuries with undiminished force to the men of today. A young man wholly devoted to his task, lifted up above the common level of the world's selfish scramble by a great ideal, a great hope, and a great devotion, standing with his sleeves rolled up and his tools in his hands—a young man who has caught a vision and found his work—shakes himself free from those who would thwart his plans and whittle away his enterprise by compromise and bring him down to their own mean level, with the words, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down." It is a message to all men and women who are, or hope to be, similarly circumstanced, who have command of their tools and have found their work, or are finding it, and who find themselves confronted—as who does not?—by temptations to drop the tools and leave the work and come down to lower levels for the fighting of unnecessary and irrelevant battles, or for the pursuit of trivial and transitory goods, or for the half-surrender of compromise.

How enviable, and how admirable, the attitude of anyone else who can say in a tone of hearty conviction, "I am doing a great work." No man can respect himself unless he respects his work. No man can be much greater or much less than his supreme task. The men whom the world has called great, and has delighted to honor and to remember, have been men who attached themselves to some great work, merged themselves in it, forgot themselves while they thought of it, and finally became great by virtue of the greatness of their devotion and their task. Find a man in history who is remembered for his ability but whose name is not connected with some important movement, and you find one who, like Aaron Burr, is remembered only for the tragedy of a wasted life—ability without character, power without purpose, a personality which would have been great if only it had given itself to some high enterprise, a great wreck but not a great man.

MEN AND INSECTS

To drift aimlessly through life with no sense of obligation to any particular enterprise; to consider one's business as nothing more than the means of acquiring bed and board, roof and raiment; to saunter perpetually down the great highway on no more urgent quest than the mere looking for something entertaining—this is an attitude toward life which condemns a man to everlasting littleness. Wealth or social position may serve as a microscope to magnify him into some apparent and temporary importance in the world's eyes, but on his own side of the microscope he is still an insect. Such a lack of serious work that is of real value to the world is not merely a condition full of temptation; it is itself disaster.

It is not necessary, of course, that a man's work shall be conspicuous in the public eye, or important news for the press, or that it be outstandingly heroic beyond the work of all other men. It may be done to no accompaniment of trumpet and drum, and with no flaunting of banners, or popular acclaim. It may be commonplace work, or dirty work, but none of these things need keep it from being great work if it is done with a great devotion, with a great desire to do it as well as it can be done, and with a great conviction that the doing of it is important for the world's welfare. It is one of the fundamental sins of our time to consider one's work as merely the means of earning a living, and to hold that any job which pays well is a good job. To be sure, for most of us, one's work must be the means by which one earns a living, but it must be more than that. It must be the projection of one's self into the world's life; it must be the contribution of the individual to society's needs. Only so can any work become worthy to be called great.

I am thinking not so much of what a man may do for a cause as of what a cause may do for a man who is wholeheartedly devoted to it. It will give him a moral dignity impossible without it. It will release the latent forces that are within him and bring to realization the potential energies of his personality. It will integrate his vagrant and fragmentary purposes of right and check the impulses that lead to the things that would both hinder the work and hurt the worker. Mighty is the saving power of a great task.

THE PURIFYING POWER OF WORK

This insistence upon the moral value of work is not for the sake of making men contented and docile underlings to be exploited in the interest of those who hold the commanding positions. The realization of it often, and rightly, has quite the contrary effect. It will make men discontented with work which has no place in it for personality. There is a moral dignity and a disciplinary value in routine labor, too, but you cannot preach the doctrine of the moral value of such labor apart from the correlative doctrine of the moral responsibility of capital and management, and the last must

come first. But that is another sermon. I am speaking now of the ennobling and purifying power of a work that is one's own, freely chosen and made the object of a great devotion.

But why speak of coming down from the wall and letting the work cease? Surely if it is ever in the heart of a man to consecrate himself to a piece of the world's work, and to set up for himself a high ideal of the way in which it is to be done, the world ought to be glad enough of it to put no obstacle in his way. It would be pleasant if it were so, but it is not so. While Nehemiah was building the wall, Sanballat was taunting him and tempting him, was trying to buy him, and bully him, and bring him down from the wall so that the work might cease. Such forces still operate.

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And yet that was a relatively simple situation. The worker was one man and the enemy was another. With us, for the most part, the case is far more difficult. The enemies that are outside of us are of little consequence. They can do no harm. The enemy from whom we have most to fear is the enemy within. If the Nehemiah within us gets all aflame with zeal and eagerness for the performance of a work which we conceive as ours, and rises to a splendid and chivalrous devotion to it in the spirit of the best ideals of integrity and honor, it is also the Sanballat within us which whispers the word of ridicule—"Don't take yourself so seriously, my boy. Think how funny you look. You are making a fool of yourself";—or sounds the note of compromise—"One step at a time; don't be a fanatic or an impractical idealist; your idea may be all right but, human nature being what it is, it won't work";—or speaks the word of surrender; or turns aside from a great work to a petty grudge or a selfish gain; or just gets tired and quits. It is not hard for even the feeblest of us, in the moments of his best impulses, to think high thoughts and plan heroic enterprises and set for himself admirable standards of character and achievement; but it is only the disciplined soul that can maintain in action the standards which he himself has set up in moments of contemplation.

While greed and avarice are always foes to business honor, they are by no means the only voices calling us to come down. There is vanity. You have a work which you know is worth doing and you take pleasure in doing it. You sacrifice your time and money for the work. But suddenly it occurs to you that you are not getting quite as much recognition as you are entitled to. You don't mind doing the work, but you think, quite justifiably, that you ought to have the credit. The papers ought to mention you more favorably and more frequently and in larger type. You ought to have a bigger title. In short, you decide that you are not appreciated, and that if people do not give you the praise you deserve, you might as well let somebody else do the work for a while. You find yourself thinking more about your grievance than about your work. The root of the trouble is that wounded vanity is calling you to come down from the wall.

TOO BUSY FOR HONORS

Perhaps there is some other particular person who is getting the credit which is due to you. Then to the pangs of wounded vanity are added the agonies of jealousy. Now the work must stop entirely until you have put this party in his proper place.

Perhaps you are not receiving the respect and deference to which you think you are entitled from your colleagues or subordinates, and you become more solicitous about securing proper recognition of your authority than you are about getting the work done. It is very easy to forget all about the work, in the heat of resentment toward those who are disrespectful. Or, worse still, you have been, or think you have been, the victim of personal injustice and the iron of bitterness enters into your soul and rankles in your very vitals. The work? What do you care for the work? You have been injured. You want revenge. And so you fret and sputter and lose the peace and tranquillity which you enjoyed when your heart was in your work, and the work itself is quite abandoned while you nurse your grievance.

These are some of the circumstances and situations which are likely to turn one aside from his work and call him down from it, and in every case the interruption, if there is one, is really not from without but from within. It is not the lack of recognition, or the injustice, that interrupts work; it is the wounded vanity or the bitter spite. And these are things quite under our own control. There is an inexhaustible fund of peace, as well as of efficiency, for the person who can say: "I have not time to fuss about the honors. I am too busy to quarrel about recognition and appreciation. I will not suffer the work to cease while I nurse my grudge or vent my temper. In short, I am doing so great work that I cannot come down to any of these things."

Is it reasonable to expect men to make their personal interests, their profits and their pride secondary to the common good? Jesus thought it was. He did not hesitate to ask it of them, and throughout the ages the best and bravest have followed no other principle. Is it not possible for the principle which has guided the leaders and heroes to become in time the commonly accepted guide of us ordinary people?

In the early ages, men thought that the sun revolved around the earth. It seemed to everyone the only sane hypothesis. It was as obvious and indubitable as the self-centered theory of life now seems to most people to be. But presently the old Ptolemaic astronomy broke down. It did not fit all the facts. It might seem to explain the earth, but it failed to account for the movements of the stars. So first Copernicus, and then the other astronomers, and then the world at large ceased to believe that the sun moves around the earth and began to believe that the earth moves around the sun. And so a new astronomy was born, which had room in it for the stars.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

The time is at hand for a similar revolution in men's thoughts in regard to the individual and society. We are still, for the most part, in the Ptolemaic period, where every individual makes himself and his own little world the center about which the universe revolves, and we say that selfishness is the spur that keeps the world moving and the bond which holds society together—which is precisely as sensible as the argument of the opponents of Copernicus that the earth could not revolve because, if it did, everything would fall off when the top became the bottom. This self-centered philosophy of life explains many of the facts of our human experience, but not all of them, and no theory is right unless it explains all the facts. It explains well enough the fact that ordinarily we feel our own hungers and weariness and yearnings more poignantly than those of others, and that in the routine by which life is carried on there are certain things which each must do for himself. But it does not explain the fact that in the larger enterprises, in crises and emergencies, men —very ordinary men who make no pretension of superior morality or notable heroism—are constantly forgetting the pusillanimous mottoes, "safety first" and "each for himself" and "after all a man must live," and are acting upon a principle so much larger that they would be ashamed to formulate it lest it should sound fantastically idealistic. Advocates of the Ptolemaic astronomy tried to explain the apparently erratic movements of the planets by an intricate system of cycles and epicycles. The more facts they had to explain the harder it became to explain them on that basis, until at last it became quite impossible. Men are trying now to explain the facts of the moral and social life by epicycles of heroism and generosity superimposed upon a fundamental principle of selfishness. It is as impossible in this case as in the other. The center must be shifted to a point outside of self. The system needs not to be patched up but to be revolutionized.

This is no wild doctrinaire theory of impossible idealism. It is simply to say that human nature is meant for life on a high level of social responsibility, and that one cannot live humanly, or happily, or, in the long run, successfully, on the lower level of purely individual self-seeking.

SELF-RESPECT AND LOYALTY

How may one get grace to stay with his work, and thereby with his best self, in the presence of alluring invitations to come down? The two chief sources of that power are self-respect and loyalty.

Self-respect, when one is asked to believe that self is not the center of interest? Certainly. No one ever thought too highly of himself. Few think highly enough. Men may think highly of themselves for foolish reasons, and they may think too exclusively of themselves; but not too highly. The egotist is not one who thinks too highly of himself but one who thinks too meanly of others. Walt Whitman, after those terrific bursts of self-glorification in his "Song of Myself," always added: "And what I claim for myself I claim also for you." Nehemiah himself, whose devotion to his work gives us our text, gave also a tremendous example of what I mean by self-respect. A rumor was set afloat that he might be assassinated and that he had better seek sanctuary in the temple. This was the advice not of his friends but of his enemies who hoped to make it appear that he was a coward and so ruin his work by destroying his prestige. His answer was a beautiful piece of high-minded arrogance; you might even say that he answered like a snob: "Should such a man as I flee? Who is there that, being such as I, would go into the temple to save his life?" Not such a craven act, one might say, and certainly not an immoral one—to save one's life by going into the temple —but beneath the dignity of one whose work was on the wall. The very affirmation of his own dignity in that haughty phrase, "such a man as I," became also an affirmation that he put his work above his life in importance. For it is one's work, more than anything else, that gives one status, dignity, the respect of others and therefore of oneself. So it was his work, operating through the sense of self-respect which it engendered, that saved him from an unworthy act. Franklin, with his prudential morality, said: "Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee." It is true in a nobler sense than he intended. Honor thy work and thy work will save thee from dishonor.

RELATING ONE'S TASK TO COSMIC PURPOSES

And the second is like unto it, for self-respect is the fruit of loyalty and loyalty is self-respect forgetting self in devotion to a larger interest. Men give their loyalty to great causes; still more, to great leaders. Men have fought bravely and died gladly for kings who were but poor symbols of governments that were themselves but poor instruments of human welfare. In the fight today for better living and for the making of a better world, nothing is more potentially productive of loyalty than a vivid sense that the cause of good is the cause of God; that neither the course of the individual human life nor the evolution of society is a random and meaningless succession of fortuitous episodes, but that they represent a purpose; that there are invisible but potent

forces making for righteousness, which can become effective only as we utilize them with intelligence and devotion.

For a work which is conceived in relation to a program at once cosmic and divine, men may reasonably have that loyalty which will forbid them to abandon the high levels upon which all good work must be done to come down into any plain of moral compromise. And when that work is seen as part of the fulfilment of the life-purpose of a Leader who evokes loyalty because he was himself loyal to the death, from such a work one simply cannot come down.

Spiritual Culture

By Kenneth Irving Brown

LET it be assumed that the college has been able to help you to comprehend areas of knowledge, to relate facts, and to draw from them significant conclusions. Let it be assumed likewise that it has strengthened for you the impetus and desire to be a faithful citizen, recognizing the human obligation which the presence of life places upon you. Perhaps the college has been able to be of practical assistance to you either through counsel or training in the ways of earning a living.

Unless in addition to all this your college years have brought an enlarging of your appreciation of those things not made with hands, unless they have aroused you to a compelling enjoyment of the more than bread-and-butter-in-life, unless they have brought you into the very presence of the eternal and the divine, your college experience has been less profitable to you than you had the right to expect it to be.

Let me bring you for your consideration three implications of spiritual culture as a quality of life; three attempts, if you please, to probe the identity of this life-direction which we have called spiritual culture.

I

First, spiritual culture implies an understanding appreciation of the highest ideals of living known to our day; it implies understanding of patterns of intelligent goodness. For the Christian those ideals will be interpreted in terms of the life and teachings of Jesus but that does not necessitate particular theological emphasis or denominational indoctrination.

It is not hard to become acquainted with traditional patterns of goodness. They are about us, neatly labeled, daily advertised. But today most of those patterns are being questioned and evaluated anew. And I for one think the process may be beneficial if we come to that evaluation with a clear head and a pure heart, and something of the hardihood of the frontiersman. But you can't be a frontiersman, either in geography or the good life, and spend your time sitting on your back porch alone.

An appreciation of the highest ideals can be achieved only with intellectual effort, the continuation of the learning spirit of student days. It implies determined and loyal commitment to the highest, a willingness to do radical thinking—and I use that word radical, not in its present meaning of half-cocked, but in its etymological meaning of root or basic or thorough—thinking that gets back to the roots of the situation.

I am thoroughly weary of hearing your generation chant their litany, "I am of the race of pioneers but I have no frontier." Get into life, "become absorbed in the warm texture of human affairs," look to a future that is not simply a colorless duplication of the past, and then see if you can sing, "I am of the race of pioneers but I have no frontier." There is an unpleasantly close relation between that chant and the wisdom of the colored man who when asked, "Where are you going?" answered, "We ain't gwine nowhere. We's *been* where we's gwine."

I have no word to add to your own experience in seeking to locate a job for next year; there are difficulties ahead. But this word I would speak to supplement that experience: there is still great need for the man who, equipped to do more than traditional thinking, can work to meet great needs.

MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

In 1920 a young fellow came to Hiram college, farm-bred and eager to renew his allegiance to rural life. He had no desire to get to a city and lose himself in the welter of competition there. After two years here, he went to a college in Kentucky and from there to Columbia university. He wanted work primarily in rural life, rural sociology, in the needs of the rural community, the rural church. His single ambition was to find as large a place for himself in a rural community and through the fulfilling of some of his dreams for such a community to demonstrate nationally what might be done.

In Kentucky he met a woman who shared those ambitions. Both were graduate students at Columbia and both prepared themselves, in addition to their work in sociology, for ordination for the Christian ministry. In 1933 the opportunity came for them to go to North Jackson, Ohio, as co-ministers as well as pastor and wife of the Federated church there. Things have been happening at North Jackson since their coming. I cannot tell you of all they have done. They have taken a camp outside the town and there have arranged for a series of summer camp-conferences for various groups —high school groups, fact-finding committees, mothers, Boy Scouts—and those conferences have meant much both to the individuals and to the community. These pastors have united that community as, I am told, it has never been united before, with a council of the leaders of all the various groups actively working for the community welfare: the school, the church, the Scouts, the relief agencies, the farm organizations. Things are being done. They have taken one of the unused churches for a parish house and have established a community recreation program of plays and folk dances, community dinners and the like.

Recently the Federal Council of Churches in America asked permission to hold North Jackson as one of their demonstration centers of rural community life in America. I mention it, not primarily to exalt the man

and the woman whose genius is behind the enterprise, but to suggest that for the person genuinely devoted to the service of his fellow men, willing to seek new paths for the fulfilment of the highest ideals, there is need today as there has been in every day—and one wonders if today that need is not greater than ever before.

II

There is a second implication of spiritual culture—that a man be a courageous idealistic realist. In his book, "The Challenge of Liberty," Herbert Hoover has written of the danger of idealism without realism when he speaks of "the woeful confirmations the world has given of the failure of idealism alone without the compass of experience." Take the idea without following Mr. Hoover's thought in the particular fields where he would apply it. Dr. Wilhelm Pauck has written in the "Intercollegian": "Too much of the enthusiasm of the American student is characterized by an abstract unrealistic idealism or it is directed toward causes that lie far away from home."

Spiritual culture must carry with it the ability to dream large dreams, to work to achieve those dreams, and in addition the ability to hold fast to reality. So often the dreamer loses touch with the world of human frailty. He builds his air castles forgetting that men and women of human proportion, were they to try to inhabit those castles, would soon wreck them.

I sometimes become alarmed lest our whole system of higher education shall work to inculcate in our students a misunderstanding of life as life is. And I sometimes fear that with our efforts to make for idealism, unless we move with great wisdom, we shall make ultimately rather for disillusion when idealism bumps up against reality. And the bedfellow of that disillusion is often a rowdy, sneering cynicism. The cynic is usually the idealist who has lost faith in his own dreams and finding himself stripped naked, he tries to hide his embarrassment in a seamy cloak of cynicism.

DREAMS MUST BE WORKED FOR

The problem is not that of dreaming fewer dreams; it is rather how to assist the dreamer to believe in his dreams, to work for his dreams even in the face of indifference and hostility and ridicule, and a still larger task is the anchoring of those dreams in daily reality. The world will never move at the pace the dreamer wants it to; it can't. If it were to try, the result would be the same as that coming to a Ford of ancient vintage driven at a modern racing speed. And yet the dreamer must not cease wanting it to move quickly.

But the dream is only a figment of mind until it can be actualized. And then the patience and the untiring effort and the persistence needed to bring that dream into being! That and the knowledge of life and mankind. Realistic idealism: idealistic realism.

As I read the panaceas which are so generally offered for our uncritical consumption I am increasingly aware how seldom they seem rooted in our common human experience. If we were planning a totally new world, we might see fit to incorporate some of the suggestions which today carry the names of their promoters, but we are required to live in a world already partly fashioned, governed apparently by certain inexorable laws, and such changes as it lies within our power to make must be made in accordance with those laws.

When Antaeus, son of Mother Earth, wrestled with Hercules, his strength oozed from him every time his feet were lifted from the ground. Something similar is true of the idealist dreaming his dreams when his feet as well as his head rest on a cloud bank.

III

There is a third characteristic of those who are spiritually cultured and I should be faithless to the traditions of Christian education if I failed to make mention of it. I speak of an increasing awareness of

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God. Accept no dogmatic dictation how that awareness shall come or what paths it shall take. Your understanding of God may not be mine, or mine yours, but that is a matter of insignificance. The important thing is that in our own way we shall have both our understanding of and our experience of God.

I am aware that in your days of physical vigor the self seems gloriously sufficient. The tasks to which you have laid your hand are for the most part not large tasks and your own strength was adequate. Your sphere of activity and interest has not yet grown to large proportion. I am not suggesting that God is simply an escape for our weakness, a solution to be sought when we face our own inadequacy; nevertheless many a man has found him in the emergency of a great need, in an hour of overwhelming sorrow and in the day when he has put his shoulder to a world-load.

But that is but a single approach. And the avenues that lead to God are many.

With the emphasis upon intellectual effort and

academic pursuits which you expect to find in a college the temptation sometimes comes to pursue God intellectually with a singleness of approach as if one could comprehend him alone through the mind. Books have been written which seek to define him and we have as a result of the search of great minds for God such stirring definitions as: "the sum total of man's noblest ambitions," "the elan vital," "creative energy," "the highest and best that has been thought in life."

But what we are sometimes likely to forget is that a God who is comprehended intellectually may be nothing more than a bit of mental machinery, a philosophical problem solved, a chapter written. God is not a theorem to be demonstrated.

Seek him with all the intellectual power of your being, but seek likewise to apprehend him appreciatively and emotionally.

The God whom Jesus Christ came to preach and to teach and to represent is more than an academic definition. Jesus called him Father. He said he was compassion and loving kindness, that he cared for men and women like a parent, yearning for their welfare and the full development of their personalities. This is more, far more than an intellectual concept of deity; this is the experiencing of the love of a heavenly Father.

The academic circles of our day, preoccupied with intellectual searching, stand ready to lose the living experience of God the Father. Men and women of your generation have a distaste for public prayer. This is due, I believe, to the puny stature of the men who have tried to voice the hearts of your generation, for there is no task more exacting or more difficult than the leadership of a group in prayer. But it is due also to your inexorable logic as you have found it hard to be intellectually honest and listen to prayer addressed to a—what for you may be only personified creative energy or personified ideals.

WHAT ABOUT PRAYER?

A recent article in The Christian Century prophesied the coming of the day when the practice of prayer would be dropped from the Christian religion. Why, you may ask? In part because having encaged God in our definition of words we do not see how logically we can pray to the life-force or the sum total of men's ideals. And our day wants to be logical.

If the day should ever be when prayer both public

(Continued on page 144)

A Pastoral Prayer

for Colleges and Universities

By William Chalmers Covert

ALMIGHTY GOD, who art the source of all life and light, we are in constant need of that vitality and radiance which cometh from Thee. We bless Thee that it is the portion assured to them who sincerely seek truth as it is in Thee. May every human personality and organized group dedicated to the larger enfranchisement of the mind and to the enrichment of the souls of men know truly where to find the wellsprings of spiritual liberty and genuine moral strength. May those who teach have intuitive understanding of the youth with whom they are privileged to walk amidst thrilling experiences of great revelations of life, and minister interpretatively to them in what is revealed both as to opportunities and obligations. May God not be far from any one of them, teacher or taught. May Thy personality, so baffling yet suffusing as it does their times and their ever expanding universe, never be lost in the vague vastness of the world of things, nor in the abstractions of human reasoning. May an abiding sense of the reality of Thy personal existence and spiritual movements in the world be achieved in the rich hours of their student experience. May that sense of Thee be so deeply rooted and so vivid that the constant pressure of material things and the urgent emphasis of superficial and artificial things may at no time and in no wise dull its power over all life.

We pray Thee that Thou wouldst reveal to those who administer the affairs of our colleges and universities in these days of difficult adjustments and grave economic obstacles, the true grounds for indomitable courage and ever reviving hopes. May the hindering things beneath which their earnest spirits chafe be lost sight of as they daily view the glowing picture of young life moving through the corridors and classrooms of the institutions for whose destiny they bear heavy burdens. Touch, we pray Thee, the imagination of these men and women that they may view with prophetic vision the higher values being born to the generation and to the whole world from the items of daily routine in their college life and work. May every administrative burden they bear, every difficult act of discipline, every curriculum and teaching problem and every complication rising out of the urgent task of meeting our changing civilization with a worthy and effective culture, take on a significance glorified by the rich spiritual possibilities they hold.

Fill all school life in our land and around the world with those ideals of universal brotherhood that inhere in the spirit and true logic of genuine culture. May the young people of these days pass from the experiences of classroom life into the world at large with convictions as to what is right and pure and fair, so deeply laid and so happily confirmed by the example and teaching formulas of their preceptors, that they may be able to withstand the testing experiences that later life brings. And may the groundwork of all true religion, a sense of reverence for God and holy things, be laid so deeply and permanently that none of the profanities and godless influences of a heedless and unspiritual world about them can seriously disturb them. And may true learning ever continue as she has even been the handmaid of highest faith. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Unifying the Parish Program

By Charles T. Holman

IN discussing the universe, as it first comes pouring into a baby's consciousness through the various nerve currents, William James described it as "one big, blooming, buzzing Confusion." The organization and program of the local church also sometimes seems to be just like that. Once it was a very simple affair. There were practically no subsidiary organizations within the church; now they are legion. First came the Sunday school, then the Ladies' Aid, then the Missionary society, then the Young People's organizations, then clubs, brotherhoods, organized classes, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Children's crusade, etc., etc., ad infinitum. A complete check list of organizations and activities compiled from a study of almost any considerable group of churches will reach appalling proportions. What most pastors find they actually have on hand is not a unified parish organization, but a congeries of organizations and agencies, bearing the name of the church indeed, but operating practically independently, seeking diverse goals, often competing for the time and talents of church members, and taking orders from a score of different head offices in New York, Philadelphia, Boston or other distant parts.

● *Some Features of a Proposed Plan*

A good many churches are trying to find some plan of organizing and administering their programs which will at once (1) unify the operations of the total parish, (2) prevent overlapping, overlooking and competition within the organization, (3) conserve the momentum of going activities, (4) facilitate the evaluation of specific program items and activities in relation to the essential function of the church, and (5) provide for democratic participation in the formulation of, and movement toward, clearly conceived goals. This article will confine itself to an attempt to outline such an organizational scheme. The only originality it can claim is that it brings together elements found separately in many church organizations which have been facing the problem and seeking a solution. And it is not suggested that any church should scrap its present organization and set up an entirely new plan. It is only hoped that some features of the proposal here made may be available to a good many churches, and may aid in unifying the total parish program.

The primary interest of the writer, it ought to be said, is not merely to develop an efficient mechanism. It is rather to find a method which will facilitate that process of interaction between individuals and groups within the church in which personality is developed and social life is reconstructed in terms of Christian ideals and values. This requires the democratic participation of all members, each making his contribution of time and talent, not so much to assure democratic control (although that is important) as to assure each individual an opportunity for growth and development. The need is to make all members and constituents of the church actual participants in the process, constructively contributing as individuals and as members of the organized group to the achievement of the purposes of the church.

Charles T. Holman

I have prepared, in connection with this article, two charts which will indicate, first, the type of organization with which many of us are, unhappily, too familiar (Chart I); and second, a form of organization toward which a good many churches are moving (Chart II). Both make the membership of the church the base line and then indicate how the church is organized to project and carry out its program. It will be evident that the following discussion is most directly applicable to congregationally governed churches, but, with modifications, it applies to other forms of church organization also.

● *The Annual Meeting Not Enough*

In the form of organization indicated in Chart I practically the only provision made for anything approaching democratic participation in the formulation and control of the church program is through the annual business meeting. Special meetings may, indeed, be called, but they rarely are, and even when called they bring out only a corporal's guard. And while the annual meeting is usually an inspiring and profitable gathering, especially for the building of morale, it is far from being a planning meeting. One eats a good meal in pleasant company, listens to a multitude of cheering reports which are ordered received and placed on file, approves the budget, elects church officers, and is sent home with the phrases of a corking address from the pastor or an eminent visitor, calling for loyalty to the church, ringing in one's ears.

The annual meeting is a good thing and ought to be retained, but it is not the time or place for democratic participation in planning, for critical evaluation of program items, for any attempt to unify the operations of the parish—it would be utterly impossible to attempt such things within available time limits. The actual building and conduct of the church program pivots almost exclusively on the pastor, who secures the approval of the deacons and trustees and enlists such cooperation as he can from others. Meanwhile the balance of the program is carried out independently by a large group of organizations, as already described, whose only contact with the total church program is made when reports are presented at the annual meeting. Such coordination as is effected is accomplished almost exclusively through consultation with the pastor, and the policy of the pastor is usually to keep hands off.

It is not intended to cast any aspersions upon these semi-independent organizations. It is with regard to their segmentary, atomistic character that a question is raised.

● *How a Church Council May Help*

A step toward the second form of church organization proposed has been taken by a great number of churches which hold an occasional "advisory" meeting, when the various church officers and the heads of these many church organizations meet for conference. The fact, however, that the purpose of the meeting is only advisory and consultative, and that inadequate provision is usually made for consideration of vital issues, some-

what lessens the value of the conference.

The form of church organization indicated in Chart II conserves the annual meeting and any necessary special business meetings of the church, but provides for a monthly meeting of a Church Council, which is vested with full authority to act for the church between church business meetings, and which includes all church officers, the heads (and perhaps additional representatives) of all church organizations, departments, commissions and committees, with the addition of a certain number of members at large to represent the congregation. This Council conserves and utilizes all the momentum and values of present organizations, but provides for their coordination and cooperation in a unified church program. Commissions may be organized, if found desirable, which would be responsible for such interests as Worship and Services, Education and Social Service; and major Divisions of Men's, Women's, Young People's and Children's Work could be organized, all, of course, to be represented on the Council. Many churches have very similar Commissions and Divisions now: Commissions on Religious Education and Social Service, for example, are commonplace, and so are Men's Departments, Young People's Church Clubs, etc. This plan merely provides a way to gear them into a unified operation.

An important element in the Council is a small Executive Committee which will plan the agenda of meetings from month to month in order to assure the proper consideration of major interests, and to prevent meetings from being entirely taken up with listening to and approving routine reports. The Council is intended to guide the church program of work, and, in order to do so efficiently, it must direct a large part of its attention to creative planning to meet emerging needs and to cope with changing situations.

● *Jurisdiction and Procedure Of the Council*

Perhaps a few quotations from the Constitution of a church which recently reorganized its government along the lines here suggested will be useful.

The section dealing with the Jurisdiction of the Council reads, in part, as follows:

(a) The duties of the Council shall be those of the governing body of the church during the interim between church business meetings.

(b) It shall be the responsibility of the Council to study the needs of the church and the community, and to determine the major objectives and policies of the church program, locally and in its world outreach; it shall have authority to approve and authorize, or to disapprove, policies of all church committees and organizations; it shall seek to correlate the programs of all committees, organizations and agencies of the church into a coordinated church program; it shall make provision to keep itself constantly supplied with such a body of information about the church, its parish and its program as shall be necessary to guide its work.

The Procedure of the Council, also in part, is thus outlined:

(a) The Council shall meet monthly, at some specified time, throughout the year. Twenty members shall constitute a quorum.

(b) The executive committee shall plan the agenda for each meeting, selecting those items of policy and program which from month to month are of chief importance.

(c) Reports of the various officers, committees, organizations and departments of the church shall be presented to the Council whenever desired by the Council, or by the officer, committee, organization or department concerned.

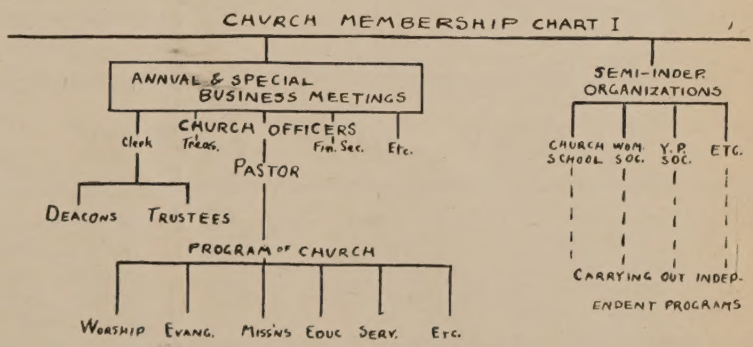
(d) The Council shall make recommendations on such matters as may be referred to it by the church, or may make recommendations to the church on its own motion. Any new business presented to the church at a business meeting may be referred to the Council.

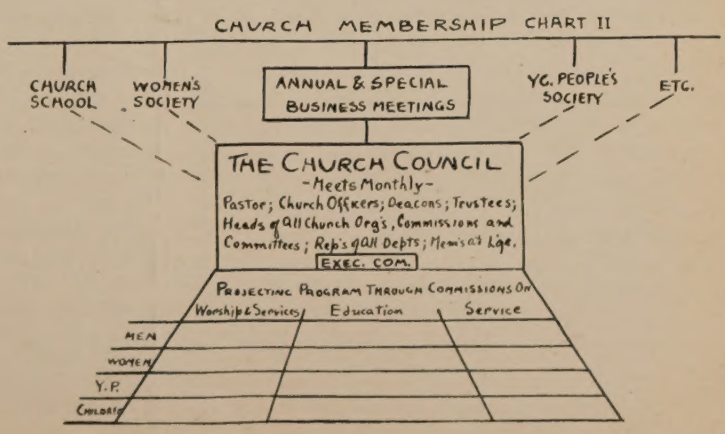
(e) Recommendations of the committees of the church to be presented to the church shall first be presented to the Council, and, by the Council, recommended to the church in such a form as the Council may approve. Any committee shall have the right of final appeal to the church provided four-fifths of the members of said committee wish to exercise that right.

● *Representative Democracy Realized in the Church*

It may be objected that such procedure is less democratic than through regular business meetings of the entire church. That might be true if church business meetings were at all well attended, but, as a matter of fact it usually is difficult to get a quorum for such meetings unless they are held at the time of the Sunday morning service. And business meetings held at that time both ruin public worship and fail to provide opportunity for mature deliberation upon matters requiring attention. Such a group as that which would constitute a Church Council is the group to plan and direct a church program.

The Council is representative democracy. People bearing major responsibilities share in making decisions, and back of them are the organizations, departments and committees which they represent, in which, also, discussion of the issues involved has already taken place. And experience has shown, in many churches which have used the plan, that, since decisions which affect various church organizations will be taken at Council meetings, the representatives of those organizations will usually be found in their places.





• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

Rev. CHARLES W. GILKEY *was pastor of* the Hyde Park Baptist church, Chicago, from 1910 to 1928; since 1926 he has been professor of preaching at the University of Chicago, and since 1928 also dean of the Chapel. In 1924 he was appointed by the university as Barrows lecturer to university centers of India. Dr. Gilkey has been university preacher at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Cornell, Stanford and many other schools. Among his published books are "Jesus and Our Generation" and "Present Day Dilemmas in Religion."

*Following a five year pastorate in Mar*ion, O., Rev. ALFRED W. SWAN went to Greeley, Colo., where he ministered at Park Congregational church for three years. Since 1930 he has led the activities of First Congregational church in Madison, Wis. Mr. Swan received his theological education at Western, McCormick (now Presbyterian) and Union seminaries.

Rev. WILLIAM S. ABERNETHY *has min*istered at Calvary Baptist church, Washington, D. C., for the past 15 years. Earlier pastorates were at Berwyn (Chicago), Ill., and Kansas City, Mo. Mr. Abernethy was for a year president of the Northern Baptist convention, and has been active in the national missionary work of his church. He is a member of the executive committee of the Baptist World Alliance.

Dr. KENNETH IRVING BROWN *was a* teacher of English at Harvard from 1921 to 1924 and professor of Biblical literature at Stephens college, Columbia, Mo., during the five years following. Since 1930 he has been president of Hiram college, Hiram, O. Dr. Brown received his education at the University of Rochester and at Harvard.

In 1916 Dr. JEROME DAVIS *was secre*tary to Dr. Wilfred Grenfell in Labrador, and during the following three years was engaged in war work in Russia. Following a lectureship at Columbia university, Dr. Davis was appointed assistant professor of sociology at Dartmouth; since 1924 he has held the Stark chair of practical philanthropy at Yale Divinity school. During many years he has been active in making investigations and surveys in the field of social service. He has written several books, among them "Adventuring in World Cooperation," "Business and the Church," "The Russian Immigrant" and "The New Russia." The sermon "Finding Power from God" was preached before an audience of Yale Divinity school students.

Dr. WINFRED ERNEST GARRISON *was* for two years president of Butler university, and in 1907 went to the southwest, where for six years he was president of the New Mexico Normal university, and later of the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. In 1913 he founded the Claremont (Cal.) School for Boys, and served as its headmaster until 1921. From 1921 to 1928 he was dean of the Disciples Divinity house, University of Chicago, and since 1921 has been professor of church history at the Disciples Divinity house and the University of Chicago. Dr. Garrison was president of the American Society of Church History for a year. He has been literary editor of The Christian Century since 1923.

Rev. WILLIAM CHALMERS COVERT *was* until his recent retirement general secretary of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian church, U. S. A.

Rev. CHARLES T. HOLMAN *is associate* professor of pastoral duties at the Divinity school of the University of Chicago.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

ADIEL J. MONCRIEF, JR., Bayshore Baptist, Tampa, Fla. "Free From a World's Passing Fashions." I Cor. 7:31, 32—"For the world as it now exists is passing away. And I would have you free from worldly anxiety." (Weymouth)

EARL D. WOODDELL, First Baptist, Port Alleghany, Pa. "The Lure of the Impossible." Matt. 5:48—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

E. K. HIGDON, Union Church of Manila, P. I. "What the Well-Dressed Christian Should Wear." Col. 3:12, 14—"You must clothe yourself with tenderness of heart, kindness, humility, gentleness, forbearance. . . . And over all these, put on love." (Goodspeed)

A. THAD. PERSONS, Woodlawn Baptist, Augusta, Ga. "Blowing Bubbles vs. Christian Living." Psa. 55:6—"Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest." Luke 9:23—"Follow me."

R. L. HARRELL, First Christian, Athens, Ga. "Children Should Be Seen—Not Hurt!" Zach. 8:5—"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

ALFRED M. KUDER, Erie Ave. Methodist, Philadelphia, Pa. "Faulting the Furnace." Exod. 32:24—"So they gave it me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf."

J. KENDRICK BALLOU, Congregational, Alturas, Cal. "The Forgotten Man." Psa. 8:4, 5—"What is man. . . . For thou hast made him a little lower than God." Matt. 22:45—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

LAST month's most important event has not taken place yet. But two events which did take place make its eventual occurrence almost certain. The two events to which reference is made were, of course, the Italian triumph in Ethiopia and the triumph of the so-called "popular front"—a combination of socialists, communists and left-wing liberals—in the French elections. Mussolini's triumph was not primarily over Haile Selassie, but over Great Britain and over the League of Nations. As such it was a triumph for the dictatorship idea over the liberal and pacific elements in European life, and it is bound therefore to give impetus to the movements toward dictatorship and toward fascism now under way in many parts of that sorely vexed continent. Nevertheless, ill-omened as is Mussolini's victory—and he must be blind who cannot see how terribly ill-omened it is!—its dark portent is to some extent offset by the outcome of the French elections. For the victory of the leftists in that election means that, as reactionary forces bid for power in Europe, liberals and radicals have now learned how to make common cause against them. When they *do* make common cause, they can control the course of government. Of course, this simultaneous triumph for reaction in Ethiopia and for liberalism in France makes more likely an eventual major clash between the two; probably a clash on a continental scale. But the French election shows that if that occurs the forces opposed to a world of dictators will have great strength.

Mussolini's Victory and The French Election

The Book of the Month

VARIETIES OF AMERICAN RELIGION, *Edited by Charles S. Braden. Willett, Clark & Company, $2.00.*

THE subtitle of this book is "The Goal of Religion as interpreted by representative exponents of seventeen distinctive types of religious thought." That goal was envisaged by the editor as salvation but he recognized that that word could be used in a social as well as an individual sense. He therefore asked each contributor to the volume what he meant by salvation—whether he regarded it as the one inclusive goal of religion or as only one phase of it; and how, in his religion, salvation or any other postulated benefits were obtained.

The editor's questionnaire was not submitted to academic teachers of religion, because they would be likely to reply in creedal or at least in theoretical terms. It was addressed to those who were doing the actual preaching accepted by large bodies of contemporary men. Nor was it addressed to exponents of this or that denominational body, for today the denomination in religion is like the state in the federal union—a historical segment, not a natural one. Thus a modernist Congregationalist and a modernist Episcopalian share certain values which a fundamentalist in either denomination would reject.

The resulting work is a striking exhibit of the wide variations of belief within the evangelical fold. Here, for the first time, within the covers of one book, orthodox and modernistic Christian teaching may be compared with the three schools of contemporary Judaism, Orthodox, National and Reform, and with Spiritualism, Mormonism and "New Thought." The pastor who is interested in church reunion will be particularly impressed by the showing which this book makes of the immense difference in point of view and in doctrinal content which must be reckoned with before greater unity can be discussed intelligently.

A Thought for the Month

FOR a long time—more than half a century—religion has been on the defensive in western society. I believe that religion is about to take the offensive again. Certainly a new strategy is demanded. Think of Christianity's long strategy of defense. There was the higher criticism of the Bible. Christianity had to defend itself against the first fears which that new method of Bible study aroused. There was the doctrine of evolution. Christianity had to defend itself against those who declared and those who feared that science would supersede God. There was the psychology of religion. Christians were profoundly anxious lest when religious experience was made the subject matter of cold, analytic psychology, the spiritual life would be explained in such a manner as to explain away its reality. Then there came social idealism in its many forms—socialism, communism, and just plain progress or meliorism. Christian faith stood trembling lest our human interest in the improvement of this world would eclipse all vision of the eternal. These movements are all finished chapters in the amazing story of a world undergoing thorough reconstruction. Today religion is getting hold of itself again. It has got to get hold of itself! It faces a struggle more desperate than any it has experienced since early Christianity. It is not a struggle between religion and no religion, between faith and non-faith. It is a struggle between Christianity and *rival religions!* Christianity now has competitors, powerful, entrenched and persuasive. They are demonic religions. Their names are Nationalism, Capitalism, Communism, Science, Sectarianism. These are men's *other* religions. They cannot be vanquished by a strategy of defense. Today the bugle calls the army of the Living God to grasp the initiative and boldly launch their attack.

Christianity Must Take the Offensive!

Charles Clayton Morrison

SPIRITUAL CULTURE

(Continued from page 139)

and private becomes a lost art, in that day, I believe, will the Christian religion disappear, for the genius of that religion is not alone the example of a good man, not alone social concern for the human welfare. The genius of Christianity, as I understand it, is the experience of a Father-God, who in his loving care for mankind has set for us the standard of our love the one for the other, and if we lose our living contact with that Father-God, refusing the fellowship with him that the saints of all ages have found possible, we shall not only cut ourselves adrift in a ruthless cosmos but will in a short time sever the feed-line for the experience of the brotherhood of man. If you thrust from you the experience of a Father-God, you will very shortly lose, either through rejection or atrophy, the experience of a brother-man.

But your problem still remains: having defined God intellectually how can I pray to him as a spirit-personality?

I found myself one summer morning, seventeen years ago, on the bridge of a merchant ship in the southern waters of the Caribbean. If I say we had been without sight of land for several days, I may give you some idea of the size and the speed of the vessel. That morning I stood at the post I was assigned to as lookout, trying to see something besides sky and water on the stretches that were before me, when suddenly there came into sight two mountain peaks of snow and ice, looking like giant clouds, hanging suspended in the air. There was no land visible, no base for the mountains, and one wondered if they were real. I called to the captain and he named the peaks—part of the range of the Sierra Nevada de Merida. My eyes even with the aid of the glasses could give me no help in sighting land. Twin snow-caps! And yet I knew for a certainty that if I pressed on far enough, I should find those two peaks united in a single range.

May I pass this simple experience on to you to illustrate man's need of finding God both intellectually, "with all your mind," and emotionally, "with all your heart." Do not let your commitment to him be wholly of the one or the other, but of both. Seek him with all your mind, scrutinize the thoughtful definitions of learned men, but pray to him as Father. The fulness of God is not within the power of man to encompass, but I believe and I dare to suggest that you believe that in the future of time we may come to understand how there may be truth both in our intellectual graspings after God and in our effort to apprehend him in a fellowship of love and service.

The man or the woman who becomes in increasing measure spiritually cultured will have, I am persuaded, a growing awareness of God.

The ideals of education are high. But except as they are manifest in human lives they are only fine words. May your lives—in your intellectual honesty, your acceptance of social responsibility, your fellowship with others, your service of man and God—be worthy.

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